

NEWS REVIEW



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Aborigines can learn from Jews

Noel Pearson | The Australian | 15 February

I sometimes ponder the peoples of the world, their relative qualities, their contribution to the contemporary world and their role in history. I sometimes ask myself which peoples I most admire, and so from time to time I compile a top 10 list. Not just admirable people, but also awful people: when one is awe-filled by a people.

At the top of my list are the Jewish people. No people have contributed more to civilisation than the Jews. Many of the greatest thinkers were Jews. They have led or played decisive roles in developing or powering philosophical movements at all points of the spectrum, from liberalism to socialism. Their ancient commitment to education and high learning is of course fundamental to their success. It is often said that their persecution and oppression is also an explanation for their resilience and seriousness as a people.

They offer some lessons about how a culturally distinct people might hold their own and succeed in a world that is often without pity. [READ MORE](#)

Twilight of the Arabs The contest for leadership in the Muslim world.

Hillel Fradkin & Lewis Libby | The Weekly Standard | 22 February

For nearly a century, the West has seen the Muslim world primarily through the prism of the Arab states that stretch from North Africa to the Persian Gulf. Born of decaying empires, these states still carry echoes of desert war and ancient calls to glory. Yet for more than a thousand years after the founding period of Islam, Arabs did not lead the Muslim world, or even the Middle East. For that millennium, non-Arab Muslim rulers to the east and north marked the course of these Islamic lands.

Then, the late 19th and early 20th centuries brought both the “Arab Awakening” and Western European ambitions to control Arab lands. Ottoman weakness abetted these developments. World War I ended four centuries of Ottoman rule in the Middle East, and, in the aftermath of World War II, the brief period of Western colonial dominance passed. Arab rule at last returned to Arab lands, as did Arab claims to leadership of the Muslim world.

Today, the Muslim world feels the growing reach of Iran and Turkey. These two—and even perhaps Pakistan, another non-Arab state—will mark the greater Muslim world in days to come. The region is returning to older patterns, driven by the states that run from the Bosphorus to the Straits of Hormuz and the Arabian Sea. Along this line lie critical chokepoints and rich concentrations of resources in the fields of western Anatolia, the waters of Mesopotamia, and the accessible oil and gas deposits of the greater Persian Gulf. For a thousand years, non-Arab states along this line dominated the Middle East. Their heirs today hold weaker hands, but their ancient hegemony furthers their belief that they are the natural leaders of the Muslim world. The dynamics of the key states along this line—including the future interactions of Turkey, Iran, and a representative Iraq—will set the course of leadership in the Islamic world. [READ MORE](#)

The pathology of Jewish Anti-Semitism

Steven Plaut | Front Page Magazine | 16 February

Jewish anti-Semitism. It sounds like a contradiction in terms, an oxymoron or a Jackie Mason joke. If only this were the case.

Jewish anti-Semitism is all around us, part of the political air we breathe, a modern disease. In the twenty-first century the world is experiencing an explosion of it, a virtual plague. Among the most malicious and venomous of all bigots, the Jewish anti-Semites are at the forefront of every smear campaign against Israel and every attempt to cow Jews of America and the West into guilty support for those in the Middle East who would like to annihilate them. Jews today are leaders in the campaigns to boycott and “divest from” Israel, and in the leadership of the “Solidarity with Terrorists” groups. They make pilgrimage to the camps of Hamas and the Hezb’Allah, cheering on terrorists and their atrocities against Jews. They pioneered the smear campaigns to paint Israel as an apartheid regime and to stigmatise it as the moral equivalent to Nazi Germany.

Just what makes Jewish anti-Semites tick is hard to explain. One of the few people to take a serious stab at doing so is Kenneth Levin, a psychiatrist at Harvard and an occasional contributor to these pages. He thinks of Jewish anti-Semitism in part as an attempt by some Jews to gain social acceptance in an environment that is hostile towards Jews.

[READ MORE](#)

Abbas's dilemmas in returning to negotiations

Key Points

- PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas has not yet given an official response on the US proposal of 'proximity talks' between the sides. The PA has pledged to give an answer on this question on Thursday.
- Abbas and those around him believe that 'backing down' from insistence on a complete settlement freeze before direct negotiations can re-commence will have a detrimental effect on the PA's public standing among the Palestinians.
- The West Bank is enjoying stability and growth with Hamas held in check. Meanwhile, the lack of the peace process is building international pressure on Israel. Furthermore, the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip would reject any return to negotiations and seek to depict it as a 'sell-out' by the PA. These factors, along with a belief in the PA leadership that talks will not bear fruit, are disincentives for the PA leadership to enter talks.

- These factors notwithstanding, the ongoing maintenance of the status quo is not in the long term interests of either the Fatah dominated PA or Israel. Abbas has made his policy the pursuit of national goals through negotiation with Israel and the international community. Without a process, his own platform, and his relations with the international community, are undermined. Abbas is coming under increasing pressure from the US and Egypt among others to enter into a negotiating process. ([BICOM](#), [READ MORE](#))

[BICOM FAQs: What are the main issues at stake in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process?](#)

TWO REACTIONS TO IDF'S AID IN HAITI

Mullen to IDF Haiti delegation: Humanity is proud of you

Jerusalem Post | 15 February

Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, met with members of the IDF's humanitarian delegation to Haiti on Monday, telling the soldiers, "the important work you did with your delegation will not be forgotten, not by us and not by the residents of Haiti." Mullen, who had requested the meeting during his three-day visit to Israel, said, "I want to express my admiration for you....You created hope and a future for those people, and humanity is proud of you." [READ MORE](#)

Lady Tonge and a Blood Libel

Uri Dromi | The Guardian | 12 February

Just when we thought we heard everything, there comes Lady Tonge, the Liberal Democrat peer in the British House of Lords, calling for Israel to set up an inquiry to disprove allegations that its medical teams in Haiti "harvested" organs of earthquake victims for use in transplants. Attacking Israel's policies is one thing; insinuating that the army of the Jewish state is stealing organs is to repeat what anti-Semites were saying about the Jews in the darkest periods of history. A blood libel, in short. [READ MORE](#)

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Ensure that the voice of your community is heard by supporting the work of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies.

Join us in the work of strengthening Jewish life.

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Jewish community participates in interfaith day of healing

The Jewish community was strongly represented at a moving interfaith ceremony on Sunday 14 February, to mark the second anniversary of the national Apology to the Aboriginal People.

Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Hindu leaders joined Indigenous people at the Kamay Botany Bay National Park to acknowledge their original ownership of this country, the continuing pain suffered by survivors of the Stolen Generations and their unique culture and tradition.

Addressing the gathering on behalf of the NSW Jewish community, NSW Jewish Board of Deputies President Robin Margo referred to some deep affinities that exist between Aboriginal and Jewish people.

“Jewish people know too well the silence that follows atrocity. We recognise in the depth of our being the genocidal atrocities that were inflicted in the past on Aboriginal people and know how the crippling effects, the fear and the pain pass down, from generation to generation.” And he referred to the famous protest in December 1938 by William Cooper and other Aboriginal leaders against the Nazis’ persecution of the Jews. “This was a magnificent gesture of humanity by people who were then not even recognised as citizens in their own country. We will never forget it.”

“While we have much still to learn, we also have an intuitive understanding of the importance to Aboriginal people of their ancient connection with the land. Because we are a people united, not only by our religion, but also by our historical and spiritual attachment to a land, which was taken from us by force ... Aboriginal and Jewish people also know what it is to endure, yet not to harden our hearts, or to lose our capacity love.”

Emanuel Synagogue Rabbi Paul Jacobson offered a prayer, as did representatives of the Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Aboriginal communities.

Also in attendance from the Jewish community were Board of Deputies CEO Vic Alhadeff, Social Justice Committee Chair, Professor Bettina Cass, and Ilona Lee, a member of the Committee and President of Shalom College.

The event was organised by the Sutherland Shire Citizens for Native Title and Reconciliation and by Shaping Our Future Together.